

WJZ-TV

BMW Cranks Up Auto Transports At Port Of Baltimore

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The perfect port for the perfect driving machine. It turns out BMW thinks Baltimore fits that description.

Alex DeMetrick reports the German automaker is upping its high-end commitment here.

Not all cargo rolls out of the Port of Baltimore in containers on the backs of trucks. Some of the most expensive merchandise rolls off on its own.

BMW plans on moving 60,000 cars a year from Germany into Baltimore, upping past commitments to the port. It's a cargo worth \$2.5 billion.

"The Port of Baltimore offers the ideal location and space to support the further growth of our business here in the United States," said BMW North America CEO Ludwig Willisch.

Part of that expansion will be new facilities to prep the cars after their sea voyage, for the trip to dealers.

The port is already the largest new car parking lot in Maryland—750,000 vehicles a year either coming in or being shipped out to markets overseas, and that's set a record.

Baltimore's now the number one port for auto transport in the country.

Here's why: "We had a very aggressive program to attract more ship lines calling here than any other port," said Jim White, executive director of Maryland Port Administration.

And the more ships stopping here, the better. It creates competition, lowering the cost to manufacturers to bring their cars to the United States.

Then there is the advantage of location.

"We're closer to the Midwest, so we have an advantage with the manufacturers in the Midwest in getting the product here," White said.

Coming or going, it is good for business.

BMW estimates the number of cars it will ship to Baltimore will hit 166,000 by the end of 2016.

BimmerPost.Com

BMW Opens Newest Vehicle Distribution Center at the Port of Baltimore

September 18, 2014

Woodcliff Lake, NJ -Today, BMW Group celebrated the official opening of its newest Vehicle Distribution Center at the Port of Baltimore. The facility will serve 96 dealers within the Central and Eastern regions of BMW's dealer network. Ludwig Willisch, President and CEO, BMW of North America, and Craig Westbrook, Vice President – Aftersales, BMW of North America, were in attendance and spoke at the opening.

"BMW Group year-to-date sales in the U.S. set a new benchmark, topping 246,000 vehicles in the first eight months of this year, and we are full of confidence that we will follow our success through the remaining months of 2014," said Ludwig Willisch, President and CEO, BMW of North America. "For us at BMW, there is nothing more important than the satisfaction of our customers, and this Vehicle Distribution Center will play a critical role in keeping our customers happy with a full supply of new BMW vehicles for them to enjoy."

With this new facility, BMW enhances its position at the largest car processing port on the East Coast. Already fully staffed, this Vehicle Distribution Center will import an estimated total of 166,000 vehicles (BMW & MINI) through 2016. Vehicle inspection, repairs (mechanical and Paint and Body), accessory installation, vehicle programming and vehicle maintenance will be performed there as well.

"This is the front line of our customer service effort, especially for our customers in the central part of the U.S.," said Craig Westbrook, Aftersales VP of BMW of North America. "Our new Baltimore port facility is dedicated to receiving from overseas, rapidly preparing and then quickly delivering new vehicles to our customers and dealers."

Located at 2700 Broening Highway, the new Vehicle Distribution Center provides room for BMW to further build its processing operation, as business continues to grow. To honor the occasion, BMW executives were joined onsite by Ray Fitzgerald, President of Wallenius Wilhelmsen Logistics, Atlantic, and James J. White, Executive Director, Maryland Port Administration.

"It's a natural evolution that BMW and WWL, longtime partners in ocean transportation, expand their supply chain cooperation into land-based logistics services," said Ray Fitzgerald, President of Wallenius Wilhelmsen Logistics, Atlantic. "Wallenius Wilhelmsen Logistics values its association with BMW and is confident in its ability to provide high quality vehicle processing and logistics services in support of BMW's long-term growth ambitions in North America."

"We are delighted to be involved in a partnership of two very highly-regarded entities in their respective industries, BMW and WWL," said James J. White, Executive Director, Maryland Port Administration. "BMW is one of the world's top auto manufacturers and WWL is second to none as a global shipping and logistics company. As the top auto-handling port in the nation, we

look forward to watching this relationship grow and succeed.”

A variety of BMW vehicles were on display at the opening event, including the revolutionary i8, BMW’s new plug-in hybrid sports car. With its futuristic design and groundbreaking technology, the BMW i8 will enter the U.S. market early autumn 2014, joining BMW i’s growing lineup of visionary vehicles dedicated to solving many of the mobility challenges faced by the world’s most densely populated cities.

WBFF-TV

BMW Opens Vehicle Distribution Center at the Port of Baltimore

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BMW celebrated the official opening of its newest vehicle distribution center at the Port of Baltimore on Thursday. Ludwig Willisch, President and CEO, BMW of North America, and Craig Westbrook, Vice President - Aftersales, BMW of North America, were in attendance. The new vehicle distribution center will import an estimated total of 166,000 vehicles (BMW & Mini) through 2016. The location will also conduct vehicle inspection, repairs (mechanical and paint & body), accessory installation, vehicle programming and vehicle maintenance. BMW will also be donating several BMW bicycles to the Baltimore City Police Department.

The Baltimore Sun

Port extends deal with BMW, strengthening auto import business

By Kevin Rector, 8:44 p.m. EDT, September 18, 2014

A new five-year deal between the port of Baltimore and high-end automaker BMW will keep bringing an estimated \$2.5 billion worth of vehicles through what is already the top auto import operation in the nation.

Officials announced the extended partnership — and a large new BMW processing center at one of the port's terminals — at a waterfront gathering Thursday, saying the new facility will bolster Baltimore's dominance in the market, create 200 jobs and set the course for growth.

"Our portfolio just got better," said Jim White, the Maryland Port Administration's executive director, who promised to do everything in his power "to make sure a five-year commitment turns into a 20-year commitment."

The automaker's new commitment comes amid continuing fears of labor unrest at the port after a strike by Baltimore longshoremen last fall.

The deal is not the first between the port and BMW, which includes Mini. The first of the maker's vehicles began arriving in March 2010, under a deal for BMW to move 50,000 vehicles into Baltimore each year. Since then, BMW has increased that to 60,000 vehicles a year.

Volume is likely to rise substantially in the coming years with the new processing facility, said Ludwig Willisch, president and CEO of BMW North America. The company expects 166,000 vehicles to arrive through the end of 2016.

The new processing facility will enable the company to customize tens of thousands of imported vehicles to local customers' specifications per year, serving a network of nearly 100 dealerships throughout the automaker's central and eastern regions.

He said BMW is bullish on the local automobile market and sees continued growth in Baltimore as inevitable.

"Every year our customers in Maryland continue to show us how much they love BMW automobiles, and today we can return the favor," said Willisch as he stood dockside in one of the port's busy terminals in Dundalk.

Behind Willisch, the giant orange hull of a Wallenius Wilhelmsen Logistics ship floated high in the water, after having offloaded a fresh order of BMW models, including the M3, 328i and 435i.

The Norwegian-Swedish carrier is the third partner in the lucrative new deal for Baltimore, handling the delivery of the automobiles from northern Germany. Ray Fitzgerald, president of the company's Atlantic Division, called Baltimore the "premiere port facility" for automobile delivery in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, and said the new partnership with BMW marks a new "era of growth" for both companies at the port.

The occasion brought a large gathering of officials to a tented affair under cloudy skies, including Helen Delich Bentley, the former congresswoman and current port adviser for whom the port is named, and Colin Tarbert, Baltimore's deputy mayor for economic and neighborhood development.

Within the new facility, mechanics and other workers will outfit BMWs and Minis with a range of accessories, including spoilers, custom wheels and exhaust systems. They also will check for any damage the vehicles might have sustained in crossing the Atlantic and install software upgrades, said Craig Westbrook, BMW North America's vice president of after sales.

Dealers want vehicles to be fully outfitted before they arrive at their lots because they begin paying interest as soon as they receive them, "which is really great for us," White said, because it means more processing work at port facilities.

The new deal will create 40 jobs in the processing facility and 160 on the docks and in associated fields at the port, White said.

The port provides 14,600 jobs, \$3 billion in personal wages and salaries, and more than \$300 million in annual state and local taxes. Including Baltimore's private terminals, the port moved 30.3 million tons of international cargo in 2013, valued at more than \$52 billion.

Last year was a record-setting year in terms of automobiles, as the port handled 749,100 cars and trucks, up from 652,000 in 2012, according to the port administration.

Recent labor tensions have made continued growth uncertain, as one of the dockworker unions that handles automobiles at the port, International Longshoremen's Association Local 333, is in a protracted contract dispute with employers. The standoff, which has included a strike that shut down port operations for three days in October, has prompted diversions of cargo by some shippers wary of labor instability.

Westbrook said the labor situation was considered by BMW when the company evaluated locating its new facility here, but was outweighed by Baltimore dockworkers' reputation for moving vehicles well and the port's prime position for serving population centers from the Mid-Atlantic to the Midwest.

Wallenius' Fitzgerald said the vehicle business is not as threatened by the labor dispute as container cargo, and that the labor situation overall is "phenomenally improved" from past decades.

Riker "Rocky" McKenzie, president of Local 333, said BMW's commitment is "another testimony" to Baltimore dockworkers' hard-won reputation for handling automobiles well. He also said it was a show of confidence in the stability of the workforce, which he said remains committed to working the docks as contract negotiations continue.

For Bentley, the deal signifies how far Baltimore has come since it received its first imported vehicles nearly 60 years ago, which she remembers occurring at Pier Six off Pratt Street — now the heart of the Inner Harbor commercial district.

"What a remarkable transition there has been from that time in the automobiles, the types of ship, bringing them in and the work that is done here in the port to prepare them for marketing," Bentley said. "It makes the port stand out in the world."